

University of Oklahoma College of Law
University of Oklahoma College of Law Digital Commons

American Indian and Alaskan Native Documents in the Congressional Serial Set: 1817-1899

2-23-1892

Memorial of Citizens of Tacoma, Washington

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.law.ou.edu/indianserialset>



Part of the [Indian and Aboriginal Law Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

S. Misc. Doc. No. 78, 52nd Cong., 1st Sess. (1892)

This Senate Miscellaneous Document is brought to you for free and open access by University of Oklahoma College of Law Digital Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in American Indian and Alaskan Native Documents in the Congressional Serial Set: 1817-1899 by an authorized administrator of University of Oklahoma College of Law Digital Commons. For more information, please contact darinfox@ou.edu.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES.

FEBRUARY 23, 1892.—Referred to the Committee on Indian Affairs and ordered to be printed.

Mr. ALLEN presented the following

**MEMORIAL OF CITIZENS OF TACOMA, WASH., PRAYING FOR THE
REMOVAL OF THE RESTRICTIONS BY WHICH THE LANDS OF
THE PUYALLUP INDIAN RESERVATION ARE NOW HELD.**

*To the honorable the Senate and House of Representatives of the United
States of America:*

Your petitioner, the Commercial Club of Tacoma, Wash., which is composed of more than five hundred of the principal business men of the city, including the wholesale, jobbing, and retail trade, mining, lumbering, manufacturing, and shipping interests of the city and State, respectfully represent:

That Tacoma is bounded on the east and southeast by the lands of the Puyallup Indians, which extend more than half way around the shores of Commencement Bay on which the city is situated; that it is bounded on the north and west by the waters of Puget Sound, and that the only direction in which free and unrestricted communication may be had with the surrounding country is toward the south and southwest, which section is for the most part a barren prairie, not suitable for cultivation; that the great body of the country tributary to Tacoma lies to the south and east, up the Puyallup Valley, where is the most valuable agricultural land, the large bodies of timber and coal and other minerals, along the foot of the Cascade Mountains.

That all this territory is cut off from Tacoma by the Puyallup Indian Reservation, which is now a comparative wilderness of 18,062 acres, not one-twentieth of which is cultivated or improved for the reason that the owners thereof, whose farms consist of from 40 to 100 acres each, are restricted by Congress from selling or mortgaging or otherwise incumbering or disposing of any part of their lands for the purposes of procuring the necessary means to clear, improve, and cultivate the remainder of their lands, or to purchase stock, tools, etc., or to build comfortable homes for their families, as they would do if these restrictions were removed.

That by reason of such conditions there are no means of communication between Tacoma and the farmers and gardeners to supply Tacoma with their products except by the way of the poor and at times impassable trails or wagon roads through the woods, to the great inconvenience and damage to the business interests of the city.

That these lands are rich agricultural lands, and would be very productive if properly cultivated, and would yield the Indians and such other farmers as should buy them handsome returns for their labor, and would soon become a region of gardens and orchards, in which would

be the homes of a prosperous people; thus contributing largely to the prosperity of the community. Instead of this, the entire tract, which stretches from the shores of the sound on the north, for nearly 10 miles across the Puyallup valley, lying as it now does, a rich, alluvial valley, overgrown by wild vines, brush, and trees, with here and there a small clearing where dwells the Indian farmer, contributes but little to the comfort of its owners and less to the community, as the lands are not subject to taxation under the present conditions and the State derives no revenue therefrom.

Some years ago the Indians who own these lands presented to our State legislature a petition, signed by every Indian on the reservation, asking that these restrictions be removed, and in accordance therewith our legislature promptly passed an act and removed the restrictions absolutely and unconditionally, subject only to ratification by Congress. A memorial was thereupon presented to Congress by our legislature, asking their consent and ratification therein, and after some delay Congress appointed the Drake commission to visit the Indians and make a report. This report is now in the hands of the Secretary of the Interior, and we most respectfully beg to call the attention of your honorable bodies to the urgent necessity of taking prompt action at the present session in removing these restrictions, and in giving to the Indians, who are civilized and citizens of the United States, with the elective franchise and all other rights of citizens, as capable of managing their own business and affairs as any other class of people, the full enjoyment of their lands, unhampered by any conditions or restrictions whatever, and we will ever pray.

This document was authorized to be signed by the president and secretary of the Commercial Club at one of their regular meetings held February 9, 1892.

COMMERCIAL CLUB, OF TACOMA.

JOHN T. REDMAN,

President.

E. L. SHAFNER,

Secretary.

